

The Cleveland Museum of Art

Free Performing Arts Festival Celebrates Gartner Auditorium Reopening at Cleveland Museum of Art

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, February 8, 2010

Eight weeks of free performances showcase eclectic mix of Greater Cleveland artists

CLEVELAND (Feb. 8, 2010) – The Cleveland Museum of Art (CMA) will celebrate the reopening of its newly renovated Gartner Auditorium with eight weeks of free performances this spring. The Opening Nights Festival, running March 12 through April 30, features some of the finest performers within Cleveland's diverse talent pool. It also allows Clevelanders to experience the capabilities of the city's newest performing arts venue through a diverse mix of high-caliber instrumental, dance and vocal artists.

Highlights of the festival include performances by members of the Cleveland Orchestra, members of the Cleveland Jazz Orchestra, Opera Cleveland Chorus, Roberto Ocasio Latin Jazz Project and Harmonia. The festival also includes a screening of the Oscar-winning Harrison Ford movie *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and the vocal stylings of local singer/songwriter Baby Dee, one of the city's best known alt-rock performers.

The complete festival schedule features:

- March 12: Joshua Smith, the Cleveland Orchestra's principle flute, will perform the Allemande from the Flute Partita of J. S. Bach. The Greater Cleveland Choral Chapter, a 50-member gospel choir, will perform soul-stirring music, and members of the Cleveland School of the Arts/Cleveland Orchestra Music Mentors program perform chamber music featuring talented high school ensembles.
- March 17: The Contemporary Youth Orchestra, the first and only of its kind in the country, will perform contemporary orchestral literature under the baton of Liza Grossman. The U.S. Coast Guard Band will fill Gartner with the sounds of its Brass Quintet.
- March 24: The Shaker Heights High School A Cappella Choir, under the direction of Dr. Robert Schneider, performed for President Obama during one of his local town hall meetings. Quire Cleveland, a professional ensemble of soloists and choral leaders from major churches in

Cleveland, will perform masterpieces from the late medieval, Renaissance and Baroque eras. The Heavenly Sounds of Grace, the signature trombone "shout band" for the United House of Prayer for All People, brings to Gartner its glorious and rollicking sacred music tradition.

- March 31: Karel Paukert, organist and choirmaster of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Cleveland Heights and CMA's former curator of musical arts, returns with a baroque music program on the harpsichord. Sujatha Srinivasan, an acclaimed performer and teacher of *Bharatanatyam*, will perform this classical South Indian dance. Members of the Cleveland Orchestra perform Beethoven's Septet, Op. 20.
- April 2: Members of the Cleveland Jazz Orchestra will light up Gartner under the direction of Sean Jones, one of the brightest trumpeters performing today and a member of the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra. Flamenco! Fairmount Spanish Dancers will bring the passion of flamenco guitar, singing and movement to Gartner.
- April 10: A screening of *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, directed by Steven Spielberg and starring Harrison Ford, will come to life on Gartner's big screen, spanning 37 feet.
- April 14: In support of a new album, Baby Dee, Cleveland's best known alt-rock singer-songwriter and anti-heroine, will launch her national tour with insightfully left-of-center songs at the piano and harp accompanied by two cellos. The Opera Cleveland Chorus, under the direction of Dean Williamson, will present a broad range of full-throated opera classics. Composer/percussionist and former Associate Director for Music Paul Cox joins Mark Jakobs, Marc Damoulakis, Scott Dixon, and friends in a performance of Louis Andriessen's *Workers Union*.
- April 16: Cleveland School of the Arts R. Nathaniel Dett Choir, directed by Dr. William Woods, performs sacred and secular works. Roberto Ocasio Latin Jazz Project brings a finely honed mix of funk, fusion, salsa, mambo and R&B.
- April 28: With tight vocal harmonies and upbeat songs that honor and expand upon the barbershop tradition, the young singers of Heights High Barbershoppers are a joy. The Oberlin Conservatory is sending its very best jazz ensemble improvisers. The Cleveland Institute of Music string ensemble, led by violinist and CIM President Joel Smirnoff, performs the Bach Double Violin Concerto.
- April 30: The Continental Strings Tamburitza Orchestra of Cleveland, led by former CMA trustee Alex Machaskee, plays music representing the Balkans, Italy, Greece, Spain, Russia, Hungary and the Middle East. Harmonia exists in the space where Cleveland meets Eastern Europe and will perform the traditional music of anywhere between the Danube and the Carpathians. The exuberant, 30-member strong Hungarian Scout Folk Ensemble joins Harmonia for colorful dances of the region.

All performances begin at 7 p.m. (with the exception of the film on April 10, which begins at 1:30 p.m.) Seating is limited. Tickets are free for Opening Nights Festival events. In the event of a sold-out performance, stand-by tickets will be issued at the door. Tickets are available through the museum box office in person or by phone at 216-421-7350 or 1-888-CMA-0033. There is a limit of four tickets per order.

The Gartner Auditorium Opening Nights Festival is made possible, in part, through the generosity of presenting sponsor KeyBank. Supporting sponsors include Donley's, The Musart Society and Westlake Reed Leskosky.

Gartner Auditorium

Marcel Breuer's 1970 addition to the Cleveland Museum of Art included the only auditorium the Hungarian modernist architect ever built. Gartner Auditorium was conceived as a multi-use hall that would not only provide a fitting home for the McMyler Organ, but also accommodate other concerts and events, including scholarly lectures, that required electronic amplification. In keeping with the building's overall aesthetic, the visual quality of the space was austere, with the exterior's horizontal granite stripes finding a perpendicular analogue in a regular pattern of vertical wooden ribs that ran floor-to-ceiling along the side and back walls of the large rectangular room.

For the current renovation, the architects Westlake Reed Leskosky worked with Paul Scarbrough of Akustiks, Inc. to analyze the sonic characteristics of the space and improve the auditorium's acoustic performance — while honoring Breuer's visual statement.

The extensive renovation includes new seats, a new aisle configuration intended to improve sightlines and an extended stage, which provides performers a more generous platform and greatly expands the range of performance styles. "The renovation will greatly enhance the pleasure of listening to and seeing events at the museum," says Massoud Saidpour, director of performing arts, music and film. "Vastly improved and adjustable acoustics will allow musicians to hear themselves better, and audiences will experience a more focused and refined sound. New audio equipment provides much better distribution of amplified sound, and with new theatrical lighting and an extended and sprung stage floor, events are going to sound and feel wonderful regardless of the nature of the presentation."

About the Cleveland Museum of Art

The Cleveland Museum of Art is renowned for the quality and breadth of its collection, which includes more than 40,000 objects and spans 6,000 years of achievement in the arts. Currently undergoing a multi-phase renovation and expansion project, it is a significant international forum for exhibitions, scholarship, performing arts and art education. Admission to the museum has been free since its founding charter.

The Cleveland Museum of Art has a membership of nearly 25,000 households and is supported by a broad range of individuals, foundations and businesses in Cleveland and Northeast Ohio. The

museum is generously funded by Cuyahoga County residents through Cuyahoga Arts and Culture. Additional support comes from the Ohio Arts Council, which helps fund the museum with state tax dollars to encourage economic growth, educational excellence and cultural enrichment for all Ohioans. For more information about the museum, its holdings, programs and events, call 1-888-CMA-0033 or visit www.ClevelandArt.org [1].

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About the Cleveland Museum of Art

The Cleveland Museum of Art is renowned for the quality and breadth of its collection, which includes more than 63,000 artworks and spans 6,000 years of achievement in the arts. The museum is a significant international forum for exhibitions, scholarship and performing arts and is a leader in digital innovations. One of the top comprehensive art museums in the nation, recognized for its award-winning Open Access program and free of charge to all, the Cleveland Museum of Art is located in the University Circle neighborhood.

The museum is supported in part by residents of Cuyahoga County through a public grant from Cuyahoga Arts & Culture and made possible in part by the Ohio Arts Council (OAC), which receives support from the State of Ohio and the National Endowment for the Arts. The OAC is a state agency that funds and supports quality arts experiences to strengthen Ohio communities culturally, educationally and economically. For more information about the museum and its holdings, programs and events, call 888-CMA-0033 or visit cma.org [2].

Press Announcements [3]

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